

ST. MATTHEW A.M.E. CHURCH

BIBLE STUDY

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**WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT
FORGIVENESS?**

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A. THE WORD FORGIVE

In the New Testament the Greek word for forgive is *aphiēmi*. It has many meanings:

to remit (a debt)

to leave (something or someone) alone

to allow (an action)

to leave

to send away

to desert or abandon

to divorce.

B. WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

Matthew 18:21-35

Merriam-Webster dictionary:

- the act of forgiving someone or something
- the attitude of someone who is willing to forgive other people

Synonyms of FORGIVENESS

- absolution, amnesty, pardon, remission, remittal, mercy

Antonyms of FORGIVENESS

- penalty, punishment, retribution

FORGIVENESS is NOT:

1. Asking God to forgive someone for hurting you.
2. Simply shrugging off the offense.
3. Forgetting that the offense occurred.
4. Trying to figure out why the person hurt you.

"To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you." - Louis B. Smedes

C. FORGIVENESS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

1. It is necessary to have a right relationship with God and others
2. It is for our own growth and happiness
3. When we don't forgive and hold on to hurt, pain, resentment, and anger, it harms us far more than it harms the offender.
4. Forgiveness gives us peace
5. It helps the forgiver

D. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FORGIVENESS?

1. God wants to forgive us and we have been forgiven
 - Psalm 103:12
 - Isaiah 1: 18
 - Isaiah 43:25-26
 - Daniel 9:9
 - Micah 7:18-19
 - Colossians 2:13-14
 - Ephesians 1:7
2. We must repent so that we can be forgiven
 - Proverbs 28:13
 - Acts 3:19
 - 1 John 1:9
3. When seeking forgiveness from God, come humbly
 - Luke 18:9-14
4. We must forgive because we have been forgiven and so that we can be forgiven
 - Matthew 6:14-15
 - Mark 11:25
 - Luke 6:37
 - Ephesians 4:31-32
 - Colossians 3:13
5. Forgiveness is better than seeking revenge or holding a grudge
 - Romans 12:17-19
 - Leviticus 19:18

- 6. Forgiveness and love are connected
 - Luke 7:47
- 7. Relationships can be restored through forgiveness
 - Genesis 50:17

E. FORGIVING OTHERS

- Luke 17:3-5
- Proverbs 25:21
- Matthew 5:44
- Ephesians 4:31-32

Forgiving others can be difficult and sometimes seem unreasonable.

“Forgiving is the only way to be fair to yourself. Would it be fair to you that the person who hurt you once goes on hurting you the rest of your life? When you refuse to forgive, you are giving the person who walloped you once, the privilege of hurting you all over again – in your memory.” Lewis Smedes.

Why do you think it is difficult to forgive those who hurt us?

Which comes first, repentance or forgiveness?

How could extending forgiveness heal a relationship? How might it heal the other person? How might it heal you?

How is it possible to forgive?

John 15: 5-17

What is the process of forgiveness?

- Realize and admit your part in the conflict
- Decide that you don't want to keep on letting that person hurt you by holding on to a grudge. Let go.
- Refrain from judgement
- Be kind instead of right
- Ask Jesus to empower you through the Holy Spirit, remembering that he has forgiven you.
- Practice giving forgiveness
- Stop looking for occasions to be offended

What if the person who offended you is dead?

- You forgive the person

F. ASKING TO BE FORGIVEN

- **Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV):** ²³ “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

It is also hard to say, “I’m sorry.”

What are the excuses we use to avoid seeking forgiveness?

What does the bible say about seeking forgiveness?

1 John 1:9

Matthew 5:25

Psalms 51:2–3

Ephesians 4:26

Matthew 18:15

Matthew 5:23–24

Luke 19:8

Think of someone you have offended. How hard will it be for you to ask for forgiveness, simply say, I am sorry? What if you do and they don't forgive you?

If you can't think of anyone, ask the Lord to search you and try you.

MEDITATION

Matthew 6: 7-15

Luke 15: 11-32

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

What action will you take based on the Holy Spirit's leading?

FORGIVENESS IS A CHOICE